

WASHINGTON - Congressman Kirk issued the following statement today regarding the indictment of U.S. Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA):

“With today’s indictment of Congressman William Jefferson (D-LA), we are reminded that members of Congress convicted of felonies are still eligible for their taxpayer-funded pensions. As stewards of the public’s money, we must do more to prevent those who violate the public’s trust from cashing their retirement checks from a jail cell.

“In January, I introduced the Congressional Integrity and Pension Forfeiture Act of 2007 (H.R. 14) which detailed 21 felonies that, if a member of Congress was found guilty of, would result in a forfeiture of their pension. On January 23, the House passed a shadow of this bill, detailing only four felonies that would cancel a pension.

“According to the Congressional Research Service, over the past 50 years, members of Congress have been convicted of at least 16 different felonies including:

- Receiving Illegal Gratuities and Bribery
- Conspiracy
- Travel Act Violations
- Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud
- Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud
- Extortion
- Embezzlement and Theft of Public Funds
- Income Tax Evasion

“While we should pass a comprehensive pension bill, for four months, the Senate has stalled any effort that would kill the pension of a member of Congress convicted of a felony.

“I call on my colleagues in Congress to make these reforms a priority, before future felons can cash in on their malfeasance.”

Offenses in Kirk Bill HR 14:

Congressional Integrity and Pension Forfeiture Act

Total: 21

- bribery of public officials and witness
- officers and employees acting as foreign principals
- conspiracy to commit offense or to defraud the United States
- perjury
- compensation to members of Congress, officers, and others in matters affecting the Government
- practice in United States Court of Federal Claims or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit by Members of Congress
- conspiracy to defraud the Government with respect to claims
- false, fictitious or fraudulent claims
- expenditures to influence voting
- promise of appointment by candidate
- solicitation of political contributions
- intimidation to secure political contributions
- place of solicitation
- public money, property or records
- statements or entries generally
- frauds and swindles
- fraud by wire, radio or television
- influencing or injuring officer or juror
- interference with commerce by threats or violence
- interstate and foreign travel or transportation in aid of racketeering enterprises
- attempt to evade or defeat tax